

I am terribly, terribly, terribly concerned that Sinclair Broadcasting is engaging in tactics reminiscent only of totalitarian governments such as that of the Soviet Union.

Far from exercising first amendment rights, Sinclair is forcing its affiliate stations to air a broadcast that is essentially propaganda and should be in the form, if one were to struggle to put a good face on it, as paid advertising for a candidate. By using intimidation to its affiliates it is actually violating traditions of freedom of the press and rights of free speech.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter. Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.